1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia

becoming premier in October, 1919, Stambolisky's first task was that of signing the peace terms drawn up by the victorious Allies.

The Treaty of Neuilly, November 27, 1919, reduced Bulgaria to a smaller area than it had held before the First Balkan War of 1912 and imposed new burdens. Bulgaria lost the Aegean coast (Western Thrace) to Greece, southern Dobruja to Romania, and strips of land on the west to Yugoslavia. The army was limited to a total of 20,000. Reparations amounting to $450,000,000 were to be paid in thirty-seven years, beginning in 1921. The existence of Bulgarian minorities in all the neighboring states furnished a basis for revisionism which steadily grew, particularly after the rise of fascism throughout Europe in the thirties.[2] The provision for an exchange of populations with Greece greatly heightened the volume of refugees who streamed into Bulgaria, adding to the political ferment and economic burdens of the country. In these and other ways, the settlement exacerbated conditions under which radicalism throve.

Stambolisky won a commanding position in the parliamentary elections of March, 1920, and proceeded to ride roughshod over both the middle class and conservative parties on the right and the Communists on the left. He instituted a number of reforms, including a land law designed to break up the crown lands and larger estates, the imposition of a heavy income tax, and the establishment of a compulsory labor service which in the first four years of operation secured the equivalent of five million wage days of work for the Ministries of Public Works and Railways. In foreign policy he sought to fulfill the treaties and to effect a reconciliation with Yugoslavia among whose Communist and Agrarian parties his concepts of Slavic federation found support. His dictatorial methods, however, won him enemies on all sides, not least among them being the Macedonians who opposed his policy of rapprochement with Yugoslavia. In June, 1923, he was overthrown by a *coup d'état* organized by a group of intellectuals, led by Professor Tsankov, and the League of Army Reserve Officers, among whom Colonels Velchev and Georgiev were leaders. A few days later Stambolisky was assassinated.

Following the Stambolisky regime, the Tsankov government (1923-26) represented a swing to the right. "Communist" insurrections and violence were suppressed with great severity. The increased activity of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) caused difficulties at home and abroad, although after the assassination of its leader Alexandrov (1924) it was split into two factions under Protoguerov and Mihailov who became bitter rivals. A threat of war with Greece arose, but was averted by the action of the League of Nations. A more conciliatory government

[2] See G. P. Genov, *Bulgaria and the Treaty of Neuilly* (Sofia, 1935).

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia

642 668 under Liapchev (1926-31) sought to reduce party strife and international friction. It secured a loan from the League of Nations to help in the settlement of refugees, but seemed powerless to prevent raids upon neighboring states by the IMRO which, after the assassination of Protoguerov in 1928, was dominated by Mihailov who openly defied the Sofia government and virtually reigned supreme in some frontier districts. The elections of June, 1931 brought a shift again to the left. The cabinets of Alexander Malinov and his successor, Nikola Mushanov, both of whom were Democrats representing middle class and intellectual groups, were supported by the Agrarians. This coalition found itself threatened by the rise of the Communist party which nearly captured a majority in the Sofia municipal elections of September, 1932. In the communal elections of November, however, the Agrarians and Democrats won a victory which emboldened them in an attempt to suppress both the Communists and the Macedonians in the following year.

643 664 64 Meanwhile Tsar Boris III, had steadily gained in authority and influence. The rapprochement with Italy signalized by the marriage of Boris to the daughter of King Victor Emmanuel III in 1930, and the part played by the Tsar in steps taken toward reconciliation with Yugoslavia and Romania (1933-34) helped to bring him to the fore. Then a series of domestic events enabled the Tsar to make himself a virtual dictator. Colonel Velchev, secretary of the Military League founded in 1930, and Kimon Georgiev, prominent in *Zveno* which was a fascistic civilian organization working for reform and a "strong" government, again helped to stage a *coup d'état*, May, 1934, ousting the Democratic-Agrarian Coalition and making Georgiev premier of a dictatorial government with Velchev as his principal adviser. Parliament was dismissed and political parties dissolved by decree. Vigorous action was taken against IMRO, forcing Mihailov to flee. Most of the promises of the new government, however, and especially the solution of the financial crisis, remained unfulfilled. Velchev's known hostility toward Boris III and his alleged republicanism alienated older army circles which helped to supplant Georgiev by General Zlatev who had the backing of the Tsar. Continued financial mismanagement and a reaction within the army itself to its political activities paved the way for a return to civilian government and the dissolution of the Military League after several of its members, including Velchev, had been convicted of conspiracy. This left Boris III master of the situation, although he proclaimed his intention of restoring constitutional rule.

644 626 Since the anomolous political situation within the country brought an inevitable reaction against the regime, elections for a new *sobranie* were

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

The War of 1939-1945

Jockeying for Position

When the European war broke out in September, 1939, the conditions in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were not dissimilar. In each country a semi-dictatorial government, primarily responsible to the monarch, ruled with the assent of a subservient parliament. The predominantly agrarian masses were discontented with both political and economic conditions but were inarticulate and ineffectively organized. While all former political parties had been officially dissolved, their members continued to carry on a half-concealed activity beneath the eyes of the censor and the political police. The economy of each country was tied, in the main, to Germany's; although in Bulgaria, Great Britain and France made a pretense at counteracting German influences, they had apparently abandoned Yugoslavia to the Axis. In foreign relations both governments officially pursued a policy of neutrality, while their ministers and rulers made open or surreptitious visits to Hitler or his henchmen. German "tourists" ceaselessly worked in each country for the benefit of the German Reich.

Beneath the surface, however, there were forces which caused Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to take different courses when the crucial test came. In Yugoslavia resistance to collaboration with the Axis sprang up the minute the government capitulated. In Bulgaria, on the other hand, the government was able to swing the country into the Axis camp and keep it there until the triumph of the United Nations and particularly Russia made it clear that the Axis was losing the war.

As late as February, 1940, the Bulgarian government[5] assured the members of the Balkan Entente that it would not press its revisionist claims while the war lasted. With the dismemberment of Romania, however, in the summer of 1940, Bulgaria considered itself absolved of this pledge and in September obtained Southern Dobruja, thus regaining the boundary of 1912. Although Romania and Hungary were persuaded in November to adhere to the Tripartite Pact of Germany, Italy, and Japan, and despite the fact that over 80 per cent of Bulgaria's trade was now being carried on with Germany, the tsar and his government refused to join the Axis. Russia, whose agreement with the Reich in August, 1939, had undoubtedly helped to confuse the Bulgarian people, may have had something to do

[5] In well-managed elections, January, 1940, the government obtained a *sobranje* composed of 140 supporters and 20 opponents of whom 9 were Communists. A new government, organized on February 16, was headed by Bogdan Filov who remained premier until he entered the Regency Council in September, 1943.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

of Yugoslavia" (AVNOJ), established at Jayce, November, 1943. Following the Teheran decision, pressure was put upon King Peter in London to make an agreement with Tito. This was accomplished in the summer of 1944 by Ivan Subašić who had been appointed premier of the government-in-exile for that purpose. As the Germans were gradually cleared out of the country after the surrender of Italy and Bulgaria, the further step of setting up a provisional government on Yugoslav soil was taken in March, 1945, when a new regency council was appointed, Tito was made premier, and Subašić became foreign minister. Though the story of the next few months was to be scarcely less exciting than that of the war period, it belongs to the era of peacemaking and reconstruction where it will be discussed.

Bulgaria

Even though Bulgaria shared in the early triumphs of the Axis, occupying Thrace as well as most of Macedonia, its position was little better than Yugoslavia's. The Bulgarian government had to adopt a policy of severe repression, especially after 1941, in order to keep in line the mass of the population whose traditional sympathies for Russia and the United States were aroused after their entry into the war against Germany. Moreover, the Third Reich made ever increasing demands upon the country as the initial Nazi victories were turned into defeat in both Russia and the Mediterranean. Reports from Bulgaria of insurrections, sabotage, student demonstrations, Communist terrorism, and disaffected public servants including army officers were common throughout 1942 and 1943. The Nazis found it necessary not only to direct all police work but also to interfere frequently in the administration of important government departments until the German Minister, Beckerle, became virtually a *Gauleiter* in a hostile land. Apparently Boris III and his governments did their best to resist the most distasteful demands, and it may well be that the tsar met his death in August, 1943, because of his refusal to yield to Hitler's requests. Some indication of the temper of the people may be gleaned from the fact that Premier Filov arranged a pro-German Council of Regency for young Tsar Simeon II without taking the risk of seeking authorization from a specially elected *sobranje* as required by the constitution.[8]

By late spring, 1944, reports began to appear concerning "Partisan" activity in Bulgaria and the formation of a "Fatherland Front" composed of

[8] Very little reliable information concerning Bulgaria since 1941 has been published. For the handiest summaries of news reports, see the references cited in footnote 6 above and also the *Bulletin of International News*, XXI XXII (1944-45). Foreign newspaper correspondents were admitted to Bulgaria only in the middle of 1945.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

Communists, Agrarians, Democrats, and republicans. In the summer the Soviet Union, against whom Bulgaria had not declared war, began to press for the ousting of the Germans and a reversal of the policy pursued since 1941. On September 2, a new Bulgarian government, headed by a former secretary of Stambolisky, Konstantin Muraviev, and including former Premier Mušanov, announced the full restoration of democratic freedom and rights, a return to neutrality, and the nullification of the Tripartite Pact. It also dispatched representatives to Cairo to negotiate an armistice with Great Britain and the United States and, on September 8, declared war on Germany. In the meantime, however, Russia, not fully satisfied with the course being pursued, declared war on Bulgaria on September 5. This confusing situation was clarified four days later when Muraviev was succeeded by a new government which had the full support of the "Fatherland Front." It was led by Kimon Georgiev, who was alleged to have experienced a change of heart since his participation in the *coup d'état* of 1934, and included his former colleague, Colonel Velchev.

Before the end of September Russian military forces had moved into the country and were rapidly turning the Bulgarian army, now placed under the command of a Russian General, Tolbukhin, against the fleeing Germans. By the formal armistice terms, signed in Moscow on October 28, 1944, Bulgaria promised to withdraw from all territories occupied in Greece and Yugoslavia, to restore all properties of the United Nations and make reparation for damages, to rid Bulgaria of all pro-Axis organizations, to coöperate in the arrest and trial of war criminals, and to accept an Allied Control Commission which would regulate and supervise the execution of the armistice. Since Russia held a dominant position in the Commission and since Bulgaria was prepared to follow Communist leadership, her lot as an ex-Axis satellite differed little from that of Yugoslavia.

Reconstruction and Peacemaking

Reconstruction in both Yugoslavia and Bulgaria took the form of a revolution led by Communists and was patterned after the policies and practices of the Soviet Union.

The National Front in Yugoslavia

The Tito government, established in Yugoslavia in 1945, promised that it would "comply with the fundamental and general principles of constitutional government" and that it intended to found a democratic, federative state. This was to consist of Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Provisional governments were formed in each of these units in April and May, 1945. While Tito's ter-

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

Y 648 fusing to attend the conference called at Paris to consider the Marshall Plan for European reconstruction, Yugoslavia manifested her determination to stand by Soviet Russia economically as well as politically.

B *The Fatherland Front in Bulgaria*

642 648 665 In attempting to fulfill the terms of the armistice and to prepare for parliamentary elections, the Georgiev government in Bulgaria, like that of Tito in Yugoslavia, was accused of pursuing totalitarian tactics. The United States and Great Britain entered protests against the conduct of the elections of November, 1945, in which 88 per cent of the vote was reported to be in favor of the Fatherland Front. The effort of the two powers to bring about the admission to the government of two representatives of "other democratic groups" proved unavailing, despite the agreement of Soviet Russia to the proposal at the Moscow Conference in December. [664] The National Assembly which chose Vassil Kolarov, a Communist, to be its president, arranged for a plebiscite, September 9, 1946, on the form of government. When the results went overwhelmingly in favor of a republic, the Assembly on September 15, declared Bulgaria to be a People's Republic. Elections in October, following the drafting of a constitution, returned an Assembly less predominantly Communist than Yugoslavia's, though whether this outcome was designed or came about because of a failure to crush the opposition effectively is not clear. The Fatherland Front majority of 366 deputies was made up of 279 Communists (Workers' Party), sixty-nine dissident Agrarians, nine *Zveno* members, eight dissident Social Democrats, and one Radical; while the opposition of 99 was composed of ninety Agrarians under the leadership of Petkov, and nine Social Democrats led by Lelchev.[10] In November Georgiev resigned as premier and was succeeded by Georgi Dimitrov, an eminent Communist who had been made famous by the Reichstag Fire Trial in 1934 and had been living in Russia until the end of the war. Like Yugoslavia, Bulgaria had entered upon the path of a Soviet-orientated state.

Peacemaking and Foreign Relations

Y-B 648 Beginning with the United Nations Conference on International Organization at San Francisco in 1945, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, whenever represented or discussed at international conferences, have been led or supported by Soviet Russia. Thus they are both aligned with the "Eastern"

[10] For a brief description of the elections and the policies of the Dimitrov regime by a sympathetic observer, see Commander Edgar P. Young, "'People's Republic Bulgaria'," *Contemporary Review*, CLXXI (March, 1947), 162-66.

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

a *paterfamilias*, with a unique concentration of power in his hands. 596
If his grown children did not submit to his control, then they could 178
leave his house but had no means of removing him against his will.
Death alone could do that.

Such was the family situation in Dragalevtsy with the coming 178
of liberation after the Russo-Turkish War in 1878. The changes 642
which have occurred in the family since then have been related in 596
no small degree to the political fortunes of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian
constitution was drawn up in Tirnovo in imitation of the constitutions
of the West, and made Bulgaria a constitutional monarchy with a
national parliament. Unfortunately, the new frame of government
disregarded many traditional practices of the peasants and sought to
impose upon them foreign ideas and strange governmental processes.

In April, 1879, Alexander of Battenberg, who was an officer 175
in the Prussian army and the favorite nephew of Tsar Alexander II
of Russia, was elected Prince over the country. In September, 1885,
Bulgaria united with Eastern Rumelia, an area which had been placed
back under nominal Turkish control by the Treaty of Berlin. Prince
Alexander, because he did not collaborate sufficiently with the Russians
in their desire to make Bulgaria completely subservient to Russia, was
abducted from Sofia and forced to abdicate in 1886. Then the Bul-
garian leaders shopped around Europe for another Prince, and finally
in 1887 chose Prince Ferdinand of the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha line. He
did much to make Bulgaria a stronger state, but he showed poor judg-
ment in ordering Bulgarian troops to attack Serbia, thereby starting
the Second Balkan War in which Bulgaria suffered catastrophic defeat
at the hands of her former allies in the First Balkan War. In 1918,
because he had been a party to the alliance of Bulgaria with the Cen-
tral Powers in the First World War, he was forced to abdicate in
favor of his son Boris.

From her inception as a state Bulgaria tried to make a success 642
of representative government. Men were urged to vote; in fact, they 666
were fined the equivalent of five dollars if they failed to vote. But in [687]
spite of the dream of Young Bulgaria at Tirnovo, in spite of her

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

642 666 vibrant youth and living hope, her fling at democracy failed, primarily because ballots were given to peasants who were not being taught the meaning of citizenship in a national state.

178 623 Those interested in democracy have much to learn from the story of government in Dragalevtsy. At the outset the informal rule of the elders, which had been recognized by the Turks, was replaced by a commune or *obshtina* with regularly elected officials. At first these units included a number of villages. By 1890 the increase in population necessitated the breaking up of the larger *obshtini* so as to include only two or three villages. In other words, the pendulum was swinging back in the direction of greater local control, the swing being further accentuated after the First World War.

665 [557] Political parties grew like mushrooms in Bulgaria. In 1930 the country had more than sixteen significant parties; in the village of Dragalevtsy, with its total population of about sixteen hundred, there were six important parties with recognized leaders and platforms. To be a party leader in the village meant added prestige; to be one in the city or on a national scale meant power. In order for a Dragalevtsy man to become a local party leader he had to be acquainted with important people in Sofia. Even though he had only one influential friend in the city, he could persuade this man to come out and help organize a party. Other peasants were invited to the organizational meeting and officers were elected. Naturally, the one who took the initiative would be chosen to an important post. Because of the multiplicity of parties and the intense strife among them, many people throughout the country breathed a sigh of relief when the authoritarian government, which came into power on May 19, 1934, abolished by decree all political parties and started the practice of appointing university graduates as mayors in villages. This meant that the head of the government in a village was not dependent upon the will of the populace but had to produce results satisfactory to the officials over him. The breakdown of the party system was associated, especially as far as the conservative peasant population was concerned, not only with forces outside the village but also with the failure of popular education to develop into "a bulwark of people rule."

175 The Exarch's office continued to be maintained in Constqntinople while the churches in Bulgaria were administered by the Holy Synod in Sofia.

World War I failed to yield the above-mentioned Macedonia and Thracian territories to Bulgaria; what is more, it sanctioned the loss to Romania of Southern Dodrudja (retroceded to Bulgaria in 1940).

In 1921, a Bulgarian National Church Council convened in Sofia in order to revise the Statute of the Exarchate. The Council established the procedure for the election of the new Exarch by the Bulgarians in Bulgaria alone without the participation of the Bulgarians in Thrace and Macedonia that the elections were continuously postponed. They were held at last in 1945 under the Fatherland Front government (infra).

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III. Status of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church within Bulgaria until 1944

A. Relationship between State and Church

The basic principles regulating the status of the Bulgarian Church are stated in Article 39 of the Constitution of 1879;

Article 39

The princedom of Bulgaria, which constitutes an integral part of the Bulgarian ecclesiastical area, shall be under the religious administration of the Holy Synod, the supreme spiritual authority of the Bulgarian Church, wherever that authority may be located. Through the latter, the

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Princedom preserves its link with the Ecumenical Eastern Church in all matters concerning the dogmas of the faith.

The opening phrase suggests that the Bulgarian Church is something of a higher authority than the State authority of the Princedom of Bulgaria. However, this has never been observed and the Bulgarian State has always striven to control the Church. There existed, however, an apparent linkage and close cooperation between the Church and State.

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In the broad sense of the term the Church was a state institution and its officials, agents of the public authority.* The budget of the Church was part of that of the State, viz., of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Denominations, which represented the state in all religious matters. All bishops, priests and administrative employees in the various parishes and dioceses received from the government modest salaries which supplemented their income from fees received for religious rites and services performed by them. Aside from that, the churches, and especially the monasteries, disposed for their subsistence, of valuable properties, such as fields, forests, or buildings, either bought by them or willed to them by parishioners. All that netted a sizable income.

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* Ivan Altinov, Divroce in Bulgaria: Brakorazvodnite Conflicti v Bulgaria (Sofia, 1929), p. 9.

793 communist initiative the Exarch in 1946. He was banished to a remote villa in the province town of Karlovo. At the present time the Bulgarian Church is again administered by the Holy Synod.

659, 642 The general principles of the communist policy toward religion were finally embodied in the so-called "Dimitrov Constitution" passed on December 4, 1947. Its Article 78 states:

> Freedom of conscience and religion, as well as freedom of performance of religious rituals is guaranteed to all citizens.
>
> The Church is separated from the State.
>
> A special law shall determine the legal status, the question of material support, and the right of internal autonomy and self-government of the various religious communities.
>
> The misuse of church and religion for political purposes and the creation of political organizations on a religious basis is forbidden.

There is no mention of the status and functions of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. All questions pertaining to this Church, as well as to the minority denominations in the country, were left in abeyance until February 1949, when a general law on religious denominations was passed on the strength of the cited constitutional provision (infra, B). This law did, among other things, mention the Bulgarian Church. This law is analyzed and translated in the next Section B.

11: Logio S-4 (no date) 1936 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

THE PASSING OF DEMOCRACY

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The announcement that Bulgaria had abandoned on May 19, 1934 the Parliamentary and democratic system of government and set up in its place a military semi-Fascist dictatorship was received with undisguised regret in countries where the democratic traditions were deep-rooted and traditional. This act of Bulgaria, which was considered as the most democratic country in the Balkans, was viewed with disappointment and vexation, it was considered as an open defection of a minor member of the same confraternity of liberal-minded peoples, to the triumph of whose conceptions and principles of government is due in the main, the progress achieved by the Western nations.

Such an opinion, however it might appear concordant with outward appearances. does not seem to be justified. For Bulgaria was never a democratically governed country, in spite of its Parliament and Constitution. And as for M. Kimon Gheorghiev and his colleagues, who effected the coup d'état, no one can uphold that they resemble in the least Plato's tyrant who, serves as prototype to modern dictators. This model tyrant was characterised by effecting „Just the reverse of medical purgation. For doctors remove the worst and leave the best; he does the opposite." (G. Lowes Dickinson, „The dialogues of Plato" p. 155). The Gheorghiev government far from putting into practice such precepts, has on the contrary administered the most salutary „purges" to Bulgaria, which effected a true catharsis, delivering the State from such disintegrating elements as the Macedonian Revolutionary organisation and the political coteries. The military who planned, car-

•642 669 ried out and imposed the change of government did this much against tneir will, and only after repeated warnings and objurgations to the politicians to mend their ways, had failed to call the latter back to reason and to duty. Far from assuming sole control of the ship of state, they have appealed to men of character and integrity and sought their co-operation and they have even confided to these civilians the direction of some of the most important branches of the administration. This liberal attitude is again in direct contradiction with the traditional behaviour of the model tyrant of Plato, for „he must have a sharp eye also for the man who is courageous or high minded or wealthy; and it is his greatest happiness to have to be the enemy of all such whether he like it or not, and plot against them until he purge the city of their presence.... Apparently he must do it if he is to rule". It is obvious therefore that the semi-military oligarchy which has assumed the reins of power in Bulgaria differs radically from the traditional enemy of democracy. In justice to the men who effected the coup d'état, it must be admitted, that they have never declared themselves admirers or exponents either of Fascism or of Hitlerism, and that they have never impugned democracy for faults which sprang from the abandonment of democracy. Their overt aim was to stave off corruption which was threatening the State with dissolution and to implant civic duties among their countrymen which will eventually render them fit for self-government. In fact by conforming themselves to Lysistrata's recipe they attempted to inculcate among their compatriots the idea of Good Citizenship, (this was according to Meredith the dominant idea of Aristophanes comedies.).

> . . . . Next, for the clubs, the cabals, and the coteries,
> banding unrigtheously, office to win,
> Treat them as clots in the wool and dissever them,
> lopping the heads that are forming therein.
> Then you should card it, and comb it, and mingle it,

THE PASSING OF DEMOCRACY

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all in one basket of love and unity,
Citizens, visitors, strangers, and sojourners,
all the entire, undivided community."

The first effect of liberty on those who are unprepared for it is often confusion, if not license, and the Bulgarian people were never trained to make a judicious use of the rights which the ultra-liberal Constitution prematurely foisted on Bulgaria, conferred on them. So far, Bulgarian political leaders, with some very rare exeptions, though they have masqueraded under every conceivable brand of democracy, ranging from social-democracy to make-believe Liberalism („Conservative" was too unattractive a party name for the astute and cunning Bulgarian demagogues to parade under and even those of conservative tendencies preferred to disguise themselves in the garb of the progressive, or of the populist) have miserably failed to educate the Bulgarians as to the elementary duties of citizenship; on the contrary all they did was to cultivate among them an inordinate sense of their rights, which was fostered by intensive appeals to their egoistic instincts. It is only those who are superficially acquainted with the inner working of parliamentary and democratic forms of government in most European countries that can remain intransigent supporters of all forms of self-government. For the latter often assume the most repulsive aspect of government, that leading to wholesale corruption and to the undermining of the moral fibre of a nation. The unlimited vista of putridity recently revealed in France and Rumania by the Stavisky scandal, and the Scoda affair, which impelled even a former Rumanian Premier, Dr. Vaida-Voevod to make on March 23, 1933 from the tribune of the Rumanian Chamber the astounding admission „that thare was something rotten in the organism of his country which must be amputated and cleansed before it could aspire to health", show that it is paying lip service to

661 517 hungry office-seekers, ready to offer their support to any politician, who would hold out to them a promise of a State or municipal office. It is from this class, reckoned to number some 300,000 strong, that every party entrusted by the Crown with the task of government, recruited its staff, dangerously depleted during the lean years the party had passed in Opposition, and replaced all organs of authority, in order to influence and doctor the will of the electorate. A Cabinet would seldom owe its appointment to office to any other consideration than royal favour, for rarely indeed could it prove that it enjoyed the confidence of the people, since such a majority as it secured in the new Chamber was obtained by methods which were a negation of parliamentarism, and a clear violation of the national will.

[642] 661 Party government in Bulgaria was always a disguised dictatorship, which imposed itself by artifices that barely permitted it to save the outward forms of parliamentarism. Except on three occasions; in 1879, 1901 and 1931, there was never a free expression of the national will. The Chamber was maintained merely to save appearances, and in order to give to the people the illusion that it participated in the government of the country. The chief aim of a party, when in power, was the enrichment of its partisans and the constitution of some reserves for the lean years it had to remain in opposition. The more the rapacious instincts of partisans were satisfied the more would a party prosper and grow powerful. An attempt to restrain the greed of its adherents would inevitably have led to its disruption. Corruption, therefore, was the basis of party life. Such an atmosphere paralysed every spiritual activity, and thwarted every noble initiative. Idealism, in fact, became an obstacle to the progress of a party, and law-breaking and peculation the main springs of its success. Before abandoning office, almost every government would vote

military decided much against their will to assume control of State affairs. This was done by the coup d'état of May 19, 1934, which met with the apparent approval of the bulk of the population, heartily sick of the disgusting squabbles of the political parties.

The military had warned in time the politicians that they should sink their quarrels and attend to the proper governing of the country; they had insisted on the necessity of the civilians combining to form a decent government, and seeing that their objurgations remained unheeded they had taken at last the task in their own hands. Even when they assumed power and in contrast with the politicians, they manifested no anxiety to fill the public offices with their adherents; they still appealed to certain civilians who enjoyed the reputation of being honest and capable men and entrusted them with responsible positions in the Government. The new Cabinet presided over by Kimon Gheorghiev had a distinctly civilian appearance, the military contented themselves with back seats, but they kept vigilant and alert and for once the rusty State machine began to function at a pace it had not experienced for years. In a manifesto to the people, drawn up in concise and blunt terms, the Government made known the reasons for which the army had decided to act, and exposed the programme it was intent on applying. The Government had learnt from the experiment of Tsankov that it was futile to seek the fusion of political parties in order to work with their support and by prescribed parliamentary methods; it therefore proceeded to dissolve both the Chamber and the political parties, declaring that the latter had outlived their usefulness. It made it known that it contemplated working out a scheme for the creation of a corporative Parliament in which all professions would be represented as well as certain political currents, but this was a matter for the future and in the meanwhile

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the Cabinet would govern by decrees. The Gheorghiev Cabinet fully justified the hopes placed in it. Never since its liberation did Bulgaria have such and efficient government; the reforms, improvements and innovations accomplished were most commendable and efficacious, and for this reason when its resignation was announced on January 22, 1935 the news caused deep disillusion and painful surprise to all those who had Bulgaria's well-being at heart.

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General Zlatev, the new Premier, was Minister of War in the Gheorghiev Cabinet; in a public speech delivered on February 24, 1935, while affirming that the programme of the Government remained identical with that proclaimed in the manifesto of May 19, he explained some of the reasons which had brought about his predecessor's resignation. According to him, his predecessors had somewhat swerved from the wishes of the army which had set them in power. Instead of prosecuting and suppressing indiscriminately all Macedonian organisations they had dissolved only the Michailovist wing (alleged to be subsidised by Italy) while the Protogerovist section (pro-Yugoslav) was allowed full liberty of action. M. Kimon Gheorghiev was alleged to have sought inordinate powers for himself, wishing to wield an authority like that of Signor Mussolini! For this purpose he had demanded that certain prerogatives of the Crown should be curtailed. These views had hurt the loyalist feelings of the army which was profoundly attached to Tsar Boris, and it had therefore decided on the Cabinet's reconstruction as a measure likely to cement the unity of the army which was threatened by the enunciation of such views. Those who know M. Kimon Gheorghiev and his colleagues, all of whom are distinguished by their extreme modesty have some difficulty in believing that either he, or any of his collaborators aspired or contemplated to don the mantle of a dictator. What they de-

11: Logio S-4 (no date) 1936 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

only disciplined force outside the army. And the communist conspiracies and cells which are almost daily discovered among all layers of Bulgarian society, are convincing proofs that communism is a theory which exerts an irresistible attraction for this long suffering people. An effective antidote to this doctrine is not conservatism, but an enlightened liberal policy which would release the community from the restrictive legacies and entanglements of the past. Such a forward looking policy was the one inspiring the colleagues of Kimon Gheorghiev who constituted a group of public-minded men, courageous enough to break with tradition, and capable of creating common interests with Bulgaria's western neighbour to replace the separate interests which had hitherto divided the two States. They tried to release Bulgaria from the crippling tradition of national sovereignty, from the economic exploitation of her parasitic industrialists and from the strangulation of her crushing and inelastic debts. Vested interests, local and foreign, leagued themselves to plot their overthrow. But Bulgaria is at the cross-roads, the path which she has just engaged herself in leads backwards to the past. A living society cannot afford to live on the past, it has to face new situations, it must evolve new ways of thinking, forge new instruments for new struggles, it has to adapt itself to new circumstances otherwise it is apt to go under. If Bulgaria wishes to go forward and ahead she must retrieve her steps and stride along the road indicated by Kimon Gheorghiev and his colleagues, or choose the only alternative course, the broad avenue leading to Bolshevism.

668

Since the above was written owing to the lack of unity among the officer corps, their attempt at reform missed fire. General Zlatev, having resorted to the high-handed measure of arresting Colonel K. Gheorghiev and

642

11 Legio S-4 (no date) 1936 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

642 Prof. A. Tsankov, was disavowed by his colleagues, who tendered their resignations and this brought about the fall of the Cabinet.

Tsar Boris entrusted on April 1935 M. A. Tochev, a close associate of ex-Tsar Ferdinand, whose former activities are recorded at length in the Bulgarian Orange book, and who had not a little share in precipitating the second Balkan war and encouraging the subsequent pro-German attitude of Bulgaria, to assume office. That T. Tochev has not wavered in his pro-German sympathies is proved by the enthusiastic welcome his Government extended to General Göring during the latter's visit to Sofia. Simultaneously a proclamation was issued promising the Bulgarian people a new Constitution more in harmony with national traditions and with the views set forth by the army in the manifesto of May 19, 1934. The proclamation ended with a formal assurance that no return to the party system would be tolerated. This was merely to allay the susceptibilities of the military, for everything points to a gradual return to the old system under a modified form.

648 The appointment of one of the most dexterous rope-dancers of the old Ferdinand circus as chief counsellor to the Crown was not a judicious act, and it has certainly not enhanced the prestige and authority of the State, nor contributed to the promotion of concord in the country. Much of the good work initiated by the Gheorghiev Government has been undone and the principles of its foreign policy are being gradually abandoned. The close association of Bulgaria with Yugoslavia was the cardinal aim of the colleagues of K. Gheorghiev and would have eventually aided the political union of the two countries, since Bulgaria in her present amputated form is unable to maintain the costly administrative mechanism of a modern State.

This ideal is now in grave danger of being frustrated.

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Bulgaria EE1

871/794 was idyllic, in spite of a rather constant exchange of uncomplimentary remarks with the Greeks.

C69 The first approach to the Church by the Communists was made rather gingerly and was not unfriendly. They seemed, indeed, to regard this venerable institution as a political instrument worth keeping in repair. True enough, religious instruction was banned from the public schools, and the control of marriage legislation was reserved to the State. Previously the Church not only had married aspirants to wedlock, but had maintained an elaborate system of marriage counseling and of divorce courts—courts with rules far more lenient than those recognized by either Catholic or conservative Protestant Churches in Western Europe. But the State budget continued to provide for the support of the clergy, and the prosecution of priests and prelates for alleged subversive activities was minimal.

● [C+2] A drastic change took place when the Communist Party assumed complete control during December, 1947, following the return of Georgi Dimitrov from Russia. The Constitution signed on the fourth day of that month dealt with religion in the customary Soviet manner: guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion, and specifically endorsing freedom of worship; on the other hand, decreeing separation of Church and State, and prohibiting political organizations based on religious belief and political activities by the Churches. During February, 1949, statutes were decreed which outlined in detail the relationship of the Churches to the government. Control over ecclesiastical matters was lodged in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which could hold the recognized authorities of each Church responsible. All such authorities had to be Bulgarian citizens, and to register with the Ministry, which might insist upon the removal from office of any clergyman it deemed undesirable. These laws, which subjected the Church to the

659/671

8: Armstrong S-4 (no date) 1951 EF1 Yugoslavia EF1
Bulgaria EE1

usually fared better in the "People's Courts" than liberals; having compromised successfully with one dictatorial régime they knew how to compromise with another to save their skins.

The Agrarians, Socialists and others had joined with the Communists in forming the "Fatherland Front" to take over from the Nazis. It was a mistake—the same mistake being made by liberals in all countries of supposing that they could collaborate on fair terms with Communists. The Bulgarian democratic elements also erred in not recognizing that American and British policy in the Balkans was chaotic and could not be depended upon after the war to prevent the spread of Soviet power in Eastern Europe. The first to pay for these mistakes were the leaders of the old Agrarian Party founded by the peasant hero, Alexander Stambuliski. As they had always worked to raise peasant living standards within the framework of the general welfare, they were the most dangerous rivals of the Communists and became their first targets. The head of the Party, Dr. G. M. Dimitrov, ceded his place to Nikola Petkov under Soviet pressure in January 1945 and escaped abroad. Petkov, who had been one of the four signers of the 1944 armistice, still trusted the word of the Communists that the Fatherland Front would be a real coalition and that the Agrarians would be permitted to carry on independent political activity. He was executed September 23, 1947. The State Department protested that his trial was a "travesty on justice" and contrary to the rights guaranteed to Bulgarian citizens at Yalta. Kostov personally prepared the case against Petkov.

With the last of the powerful and avowed opponents of dictatorship out of the way, the Communists were free to proclaim Bulgaria a one-party state. They did so on February 4, 1948, securing for their country the honor of being the first satellite to abandon the pretense of a popular front. This was the period, one recalls, when Dimitrov was being rebuked by *Pravda* for favoring a Balkan or Danubian federation, and was issuing his denials, and when Moscow was beginning to talk secretly inside the Cominform about expelling Tito. The connection of these events is not to be missed.

Ordinarily Dimitrov might not have gotten off so lightly, but there were reasons for not sullying the name of such a great Communist luminary, the hero of the Reichstag fire trial, at the very moment

648, 665, 642, 433

Bulgaria EE1

[For the economic and political position of Bulgaria under Soviet control since the death of Stalin, see 85: Zinner, R1 Soviet Union, category 116, Pp. 157B-163B.]